

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A survey system, comprising:

a survey results data structure providing a consistently organized framework with topic structure organizing survey results and supporting material from selected information sources; and

feedback loops operable to capture information from users and experts accessing the system.

2. The system of claim 1, comprising a country specific index calculator adapted to integrate international aspects including at least one of:
 - (a) components for other countries;
 - (b) oil prices and supplies;
 - (c) behavioral aspects relating to at least one of wars, reconstruction, alliances, and terrorism.

3. The system of claim 1, further comprising an initial index adapted to capture specific behavioral aspects, including at least one of:

(a) confidence in business, including corporate governance and behaviors;

(b) confidence in financial markets, including economy relating to employment;

(c) fairness and equity in management compensation, health insurance for employees, incomes, and unemployment;

(d) uncertainty about domestic political and economic factors, about interest rates, about deficits, unemployment, and the economy in general; and

(e) uncertainty about international political and economic factors, wars, reconstruction, alliances, free trade, and terrorism.

4. The system of claim 1, further comprising excerpts providing specific information from at least one of a clip, a report of an event, or a specifically worded statement about an event or article in combination with an invitation for a response from at least one of a user and expert.

5. The system of claim 1, further comprising a plurality of rolling topics adapted to receive new topics that have assumed prominence, wherein topics that are not prominent for a particular period can be retained but hibernated, and topics are omitted once they have declined in significance.

6. The system of claim 1, further comprising an output making at least one of scoring results and feedback results accessible in combination with supporting material to which the feedback relates.

7. The system of claim 1, further comprising a linked information system providing access to the supporting material.

8. The system of claim 1, further comprising a user index and an expert index.

9. A survey system, comprising:
 - a graphic user interface accessing a datastore of information according to linkages indicating relevance of information content to information content, wherein the interface is adapted to present the information to respondents in combination with an interpretation of the information;
 - a response mechanism allowing respondents to provide feedback relating to relevance of the information to the information, and relating to the interpretation of the information; and
 - a results presentation mechanism adapted to combine the interpretation and the user feedback into overall survey results and present the results to the respondents.

10. The system of claim 9, comprising a behavioral aspects index format including:

(a) an initial index having at least three parts, including a first part relating to at least one of economy and business markets, a second part relating to behavioral aspects, and a third part relating to an external view of countries and regions, wherein topics are selected for each of the first, second, and third parts;

(b) at least one respondent index including poll results from selected respondents in combination with information relating to the topics of the initial index, including at least one of:

(i) a user index including poll results from selected users; and

(ii) an expert index including poll results from selected experts; and

(c) an overall index generated from a combination of the initial index and the response indices.

11. The system of claim 9, wherein the graphic user interface implements a progressive organizational framework including:

a visual display of a topic;

a plurality of active windows visually configured to convey a relationship between risk and opportunity, wherein a visual configuration of the plurality of active windows form a spectrum defined with low risk and high opportunity at substantially one end, and high risk and low opportunity at substantially another end; and

a plurality of subtopics visually populating the plurality of active windows, wherein the plurality of subtopics relate to the topic of the visual display.

12. The system of claim 9, further comprising, a distributed computer system providing remotely located users access over a computer network to:

(a) a data store of links between selected portions of information present in media content, wherein the media content is selected based on relevance to the field of economics, and the media content is available over the computer network in an electronic format;

(b) markup of linked information pointing out relevance of one portion of information to another, linked portion of information; and

(c) a data store of expert commentary providing insight on economic topics of interest and groups of related media content,

wherein the data store of links and the markup of linked information are continuously adapted to accommodate newly available media content relevant to the field of economics, and to accommodate new meanings of previously linked information as the new meanings develop over time.

13. A survey system, comprising:

a selection of topics organizing information relevant to a particular period of time, wherein the topics are rolled from one period to the next by hibernating topics that are deemed by an editor to be of less significance to a current period of time than topics that are not hibernated; and

a response mechanism allowing respondents to provide feedback relating to at least one of significance of the topics and relevance of the information, wherein the feedback is employed to fine tune the selection of topics.

14. The system of claim 13, comprising a behavioral aspects index format including:

(a) an initial index having at least three parts, including a first part relating to at least one of economy and business markets, a second part relating to behavioral aspects, and a third part relating to an external view of countries and regions, wherein topics are selected for each of the first, second, and third parts;

(b) at least one respondent index including poll results from selected respondents in combination with information relating to the topics of the initial index, including at least one of:

(i) a user index including poll results from selected users; and

(ii) an expert index including poll results from selected experts; and

(c) an overall index generated from a combination of the initial index and the response indices.

15. The system of claim 13, comprising a graphic user interface implementing a progressive organizational framework including:

a visual display of a topic;

a plurality of active windows visually configured to convey a relationship between risk and opportunity, wherein a visual configuration of the plurality of active windows form a spectrum defined with low risk and high opportunity at substantially one end, and high risk and low opportunity at substantially another end; and

a plurality of subtopics visually populating the plurality of active windows, wherein the plurality of subtopics relate to the topic of the visual display.

16. The system of claim 13, further comprising, a distributed computer system providing remotely located users access over a computer network to:

(a) a data store of links between selected portions of information present in media content, wherein the media content is selected based on relevance to the field of economics, and the media content is available over the computer network in an electronic format;

(b) markup of linked information pointing out relevance of one portion of information to another, linked portion of information; and

(c) a data store of expert commentary providing insight on economic topics of interest and groups of related media content,

wherein the data store of links and the markup of linked information are continuously adapted to accommodate newly available media content relevant to the field of economics, and to accommodate new meanings of previously linked information as the new meanings develop over time.

17. A behavioral aspects index, comprising:

(a) an initial index having at least three parts, including a first part relating to at least one of economy and business markets, a second part relating to behavioral aspects, and a third part relating to an external view of countries and regions, wherein topics are selected for each of the first, second, and third parts;

(b) at least one respondent index including poll results from selected respondents in combination with information relating to the topics of the initial index, including at least one of:

(i) a user index including poll results from selected users; and

(ii) an expert index including poll results from selected experts; and

(c) an overall index generated from a combination of the initial index and the response indices.

18. The index of claim 17, further comprising a resilience test and commentary for each index.

19. The index of claim 17, wherein the behavioral aspects relate to a majority of uncertainty, confidence, corporate governance, fairness, and equity.

20. The index of claim 17, wherein scores assigned for an initial index calculation are assigned by a producer of the behavioral aspects index to at least one of selected articles, selected reports, and information relating to events.

21. The index of claim 17, wherein scores assigned for a respondent index calculation are assigned by at least one of selected users and selected experts to at least one of selected articles relating to information about a significant event, selected reports relating to information about a significant event, and a statement about a significant event.

22. The index of claim 17, comprising a selection of topics that is fine-tuned based on the poll results, wherein topics are rolled from one period to the next by editing or hibernating topics that are no longer significant.

23. The index of claim 17, comprising detailed information including reports, articles and other information that is provided to respondents to facilitate an educated response for the respondent index.

24. The index of claim 17, wherein scores assigned to the behavioral aspects are weighted to significantly impact calculations for the initial index, the respondent index, and the overall index.

25. The index of claim 17, wherein international aspects are incorporated into the first part, the second part, and the third part of the initial index.

26. The index of claim 17, comprising a linked information system providing respondents access to interrelated information, wherein the linked information system has a graphic user interface illustrating multilevel linkages interrelating the information.

27. The index of claim 17, comprising:
a single framework of interconnected information accessible to respondents, including both users and experts; and
an interaction environment adapted to permit both users and experts to employ the framework to share information.

28. The index of claim 17, comprising a response sheet allowing respondents to provide feedback.

29. Computer software comprising:

a display module adapted to communicate topically organized information to multiple classifications of respondents in combination with an interpretation of the information and an invitation to provide feedback relating to the interpretation;

a response mechanism adapted to provide the respondent with an opportunity to provide feedback relating to the interpretation; and

an opinion compilation module adapted to compile the feedback and the interpretation into an overall interpretation.

30. The software of claim 29, wherein the display module is adapted to communicate the feedback organized by respondent classification to the multiple classifications of respondents.

31. The software of claim 29, wherein the display module is adapted to communicate the overall interpretation to the multiple classifications of respondents.

32. The software of claim 29, wherein the display module is adapted to communicate links between interrelated information to the multiple classifications of respondents, and to markup the interrelated information according to the interpretation.

33. The software of claim 29, comprising:

a browsable datastore of topics organizing links between information content based on relevance of the linked information to the topics, wherein the topics relate to economy and business markets, behavioral aspects, and an external view of countries and regions; and

a rolling topic management module adapted to hibernate topics and revive topics based on relevance of the topics to current events.

34. A method for determining economic sentiment, comprising:

selecting topics that are critical in determining confidence relating to an economy and markets;

gathering information relevant to the topics;

developing an organizational presentation of the information according to the topics, wherein the organizational presentation has a categorization in support of a point system index;

presenting the information to designated individuals in accordance with the organizational presentation;

polling the designated individuals on a regular basis according to the categorization, thereby obtaining results indicative of sentiment relating to the topics; and

generating a report including a point system index on behavioral aspects of the markets based on the results and the categorization.

35. The method of claim 34, comprising:
developing commentary relating to the information, wherein the commentary has a categorization in support of a point system index;
presenting the commentary to the designated individuals in accordance with the categorization.

36. The method of claim 34, comprising:
developing overall commentary based on the results, wherein the overall commentary relates to the economy and markets as a whole; and
presenting the overall commentary to the designated individuals.

37. The method of claim 34, comprising presenting the results to the designated individuals.

38. The method of claim 34, comprising fine tuning selection of the topics based on the results.

39. The method of claim 34, comprising reselecting the topics on a regular basis in view of changes in a situation relating to the economy and markets, thereby ensuring that the selected topics are critical at a particular time in determining confidence relating to the economy and markets.

40. The method of claim 34, comprising gathering new information relating to the topics and discarding old information on a regular basis.

41. The method of claim 34, comprising providing a behavioral aspects index developed from at least one of user feedback and expert feedback relating to an initial index adapted to capture specific behavioral aspects, including at least one of:

(a) confidence in business, including corporate governance and behaviors;

(b) confidence in financial markets, including economy relating to employment;

(c) fairness and equity in management compensation, health insurance for employees, incomes, and unemployment;

(d) uncertainty about domestic political and economic factors, about interest rates, about deficits, unemployment, and the economy in general; and

(e) uncertainty about international political and economic factors, wars, reconstruction, alliances, free trade, and terrorism.